

Effective Date: September 13, 1994

POLICY

Authority: RCW 28B.35.120(12); WAC 516-26
Approved: Board of Trustees 6/94

POL-U7100.01 -- STUDENT RECORDS POLICY

This Policy applies to students enrolled at Western Washington University

Preamble

The purpose of this Student Records Policy is to establish rules and procedures that appropriately implement the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Western Washington University is committed to safeguarding appropriate access to student educational records as well as maintaining individual student privacy. The university records officer works to ensure that information contained in student records is treated responsibly with due regard for its personal nature, and for the students', university's and community's needs. Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the university records officer.

- (1) Generally, students have the right to review and copy their education records. Students also have the right to challenge the content of, release of, or denial of access to their education records.
- (2) The university will normally not permit access to or release of student records to the public without a student's written permission; some exceptions exist, as detailed in this policy.
- (3) The university may release directory information concerning a student unless the student requests in writing that it not be released.

WAC 516-26-010

Definitions of Terms

For purposes of this chapter, the following terms shall have the indicated meanings:

- (1) "Student" shall mean any person, regardless of age, who is or has been officially registered at and attending Western Washington University and with respect to whom the university maintains education records or personally-identifiable information.

(2)(a) (i) "Education records" shall refer to those records, files, documents and other materials maintained by Western Washington University or by a person acting for Western Washington University which contain information directly related to a student.

(ii) Records relating to an individual in attendance at the university who is employed as a result of his or her status as a student are considered education records. Records made and maintained by the university in the normal course of business which relate exclusively to a person's capacity as an employee and are not available for any other purpose are not considered education records.

(b) The Term "education records" does not include the following:

(i) Records of instructional, supervisory or administrative personnel and educational personnel ancillary to those persons, which are kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record, and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute;

(ii) Records of the university's public safety office maintained solely for law enforcement purposes, disclosed only to law enforcement officials of the same jurisdiction, and maintained separately from education records in WAC 516-26-020(2)(a); but only if said law enforcement personnel do not have access to education records under WAC 516-26-080; or

(iii) Records concerning a student which are created or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional or paraprofessional capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are created, maintained or used only in connection with the provision of treatment to the student and are not available to anyone other than persons providing such treatment, except that such records may be personally reviewed by a physician or other appropriate professional of the student's choice.

(4) "Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean for Academic Support Services" shall refer to the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean for Academic Support Services or his or her designee.

- (5) "University Records Officer" shall refer to that individual (or his or her designee) responsible for the policies safeguarding the access, release, or copying of educational records and for informing students and parents of their rights.
- (6) "Records Center Manager" shall refer to that individual (or his or her designee) responsible for the facilitation of the development of records retention schedules.
- (7) "Records Coordinator" shall refer to that individual (or his or her designee) designated by the department or unit head to be responsible for the custody of the education record(s) in that office, department or unit.
- (8) "Unit Head" shall refer to that individual (or his or her designee) responsible for the supervision or management of an institutional department or unit.

WAC 516-26-020

Access to Education Records

- (1) Except as provided in WAC 516-26-035, each student at Western Washington University shall have access to his or her education records. The right of access shall include the right to inspect, review, and obtain copies of education records.
- (2) The records coordinator is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date records retention schedule which lists the types of student education records maintained by that office, department or unit. The said records retention schedule is also filed with the records center manager and the state archives in Olympia.
- (3) A student wishing access to his or her education records shall submit a written request for access to the appropriate records coordinator. The records coordinator shall respond to a request for access within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed five days.
- (4) The records coordinator shall provide students of the university with an opportunity for reasonable access to education records, and shall be responsible for taking appropriate measures to safeguard and insure the security and privacy of the institution's records while being inspected by students.
- (5) The records coordinator will inform in writing a student who has requested access to his or her education records of the

nature of any records which are being withheld from the student on the basis of the exceptions set forth in WAC 516-26-035. A student may file with the university records officer a request to review the decision by the records coordinator and/or by the unit head as per WAC 516-26-055 to withhold certain of the student's records. A student may also request a review of the university records officer's decision to withhold certain of the student's records by filing an appeal with the student academic grievance board; refer to WAC 516-26-060.

WAC 516-26-030

Access to Education Records—Limitations on Access

- (1) Western Washington University shall not make available to a student the following types of materials:
 - (a) The financial records of the student's parents or any information contained therein, if the parents have requested in writing that such information remain confidential.
 - (b) Letters or statements of recommendation, evaluation or comment which were provided to the university in confidence, either expressed or implied, prior to January 1, 1975, provided that such letters or statements shall not be used for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended.
 - (c) If a student has signed a waiver of the student's right of access in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, confidential records relating to the following:
 - (i) Admission to any educational agency or institution;
 - (ii) An application for employment; or
 - (iii) The receipt of an honor or honorary recognition.
- (2) A student, or a person applying for admission to the university, may waive his or her right of access to the type of confidential records referred to in subsection (1)(c) of this section, provided that such a waiver shall apply only if the student is, upon request, notified of the names of all persons making confidential recommendations, and such recommendations are used solely for the specific purpose for which the waiver has been granted. The university is not allowed to require such a waiver as a condition for admission to, receipt of financial aid from, or receipt of other services or

benefits from the university.

- (3) If any material or document in the education record of a student includes information concerning more than one student, the student shall only have the right either to inspect and review that portion of the material or document which relates to the student or to be informed of the specific information contained in that portion of the material or document.

WAC 516-26-035

Right to Copy Education Records

- (1) The records coordinator shall, at the request of a student, provide the student with copies of the student's education records. The fees for providing such copies shall not exceed the actual cost to the university of providing the copies.
- (2) Official copies of transcripts from other educational institutions, such as high school or other college transcripts, will not be provided to students by the university.

WAC 516-26-040

Request for Explanation or Interpretation of Record

The records coordinator shall respond to reasonable requests for explanations or interpretations of the contents of student education records.

WAC 516-26-045

Challenges—to Content of Education Records—to Release of Education Records—or to Denial of Access to Education Records

- (1) Any student who believes that inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise inappropriate data is contained within his or her education records shall be permitted to have included within the record a written explanation by the student concerning the content of the records.
- (2) A student shall have the right, in accordance with the procedures set forth in WAC 516-26-055 and 516-26-060, to:
 - (a) Challenge the content of education records in order to insure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the students;
 - (b) Have the opportunity to request the correction or deletion of inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise

inappropriate data contained within education records;

- (c) Challenge the release of education records to specific persons as contrary to the provisions of this chapter; and
 - (d) Challenge a decision by the university to deny the student access to particular types of records.
- (3) A student shall not be permitted under this chapter to challenge the validity of grades given in academic courses, except on the grounds that, as a result of clerical error, the student's records fail to accurately reflect the grades actually assigned by an instructor.

WAC 516-26-050

Challenges—Informal Proceedings

A student wishing to exercise the rights set forth in WAC 516-26-050(2) shall first discuss with the records coordinator the nature of the corrective action sought by the student. Failing resolution, the student shall next discuss with the department or unit head the corrective action sought by the student. Failing resolution, the student shall next discuss with the university records officer the corrective action sought by the student, as outlined in WAC 516-20-030(5).

WAC 516-26-055

Challenges—Hearing Before Student Academic Grievance Board

- (1) If informal proceedings fail to resolve the complaint of a student, the student may file a written request for an appeal to the student academic grievance board of the university.
- (2) The student academic grievance board shall process the appeal according to procedures outlined in the student academic grievance policy.
- (3) If a student demonstrates that the student's education records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student, the student academic grievance board shall have authority to order the correction or deletion of inaccurate, misleading or otherwise inappropriate data contained in the records.
- (4) If a student demonstrates that the release of the student's education records would be improper under this chapter, the student academic grievance board shall have authority to order that the records not be released.

- (5) If a student demonstrates that the student is entitled to access to particular documents under this chapter, the student academic grievance board shall have authority to order that the student be permitted access to the records.
- (6) The decision of the student academic grievance board shall be rendered in writing within a reasonable period of time after the conclusion of the hearing.

WAC 516-26-060

Release of Personally Identifiable Information or Education Records

The university shall not permit access to or release of a student's education records or personally identifiable information contained therein to any person without the written consent of the student, except as provided in WAC 516-26-080, 516-26-085, or 516-26-090. Misuse or inappropriate access to student education records may result in disciplinary action.

WAC 516-26-070

Release of Personally Identifiable Information or Education Records—Nature of Consent Required

Where the consent of a student is required under WAC 516-26-070 for the release of education records or personally identifiable materials contained therein, the student's consent shall be in writing, shall be signed and dated by the student, and shall include a specification of the records to be released, the reasons for such release, and the names of the parties to whom the records may be released.

WAC 516-26-075

Release of Personally Identifiable Information or Education Records—Exceptions to Consent Requirement

- (1) The university may permit the access to or release of a student's education records or personally identifiable information contained therein without the written consent of the student to the following parties:
 - (a) University officials, including faculty members, when the information is required for a legitimate education purpose within the scope of the recipient's official responsibilities with the university and will be used only in connection with the performance of those responsibilities;
 - (b) Federal or state officials requiring access to education records in connection with the audit or evaluation of

federally or state supported educational programs or in connection with the enforcement of federal or state legal requirements relating to such programs. In such cases the information required shall be protected by the federal or state officials in a manner which shall not permit the personal identification of students or their parents to other than those officials, and such personally identifiable data shall be destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes for which it was provided;

- (c) Agencies or organizations requesting information in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid;
 - (d) Organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the university for purposes of developing, validating or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, or improving instruction, if such studies are conducted in a manner which will not permit the personal identification of students by persons other than representatives of such organizations, and the information will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes for which it was provided;
 - (e) Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions; or
 - (f) Any person or entity authorized by judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena to receive such records or information, upon condition that the student is notified of all such orders or subpoenas in advance of the compliance therewith by the university. Any university employee or official receiving a subpoena or judicial order for education records or personally identifiable information contained therein shall immediately notify the assistant attorney general representing the university;
 - (g) An alleged victim of any crime of violence (as defined in section 16 of Title 18, United States Code) may have disclosed the results of any disciplinary proceedings conducted by the university against the alleged perpetrator of such crime with respect to such crime, without the consent of the alleged perpetrator.
- (2) Education records of a student or personally identifiable information contained therein which are released to third parties, with or without the consent of the student involved,

shall be accompanied by a written statement indicating that the information cannot subsequently be released in a personally identifiable form to any other party without the written consent of the student involved.

- (3) The university shall maintain a record, kept with the education records of each student, indicating all parties, other than those parties specified in WAC 516-26-080(1)(a), which have requested or obtained access to the student's education records, and indicating the legitimate interest that each such party has in obtaining the records or information contained therein. This record of access shall be available only to the student, to the employees of the university responsible for maintaining the records, and to the parties identified under WAC 516-26-080(1)(a) and (c).

WAC 516-26-080

Release of Information in Emergencies

- (1) The vice president for student affairs or his designee may, without the consent of a student, release the student's education records or personally identifiable information contained therein to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.
- (2) The university police, during instances of emergency pertaining to individual students, may have access to those student's education records or personally identifiable information.
- (3) The following factors should be taken into consideration in determining whether records may be released under this section:
 - (a) The seriousness of the threat to the health or safety of the student or other persons;
 - (b) The need for personally identifiable information concerning the student to meet the emergency;
 - (c) Whether the parties to whom the records or information are released are in a position to deal with the emergency; and
 - (d) The extent to which time is of the essence in dealing with the emergency.
- (4) If the university, pursuant to subsection (1) of this section,

released personally identifiable information concerning a student without the student's consent, the university shall notify the student as soon as possible of the identity of the parties and to whom the records or information have been released and of the reasons for the release.

WAC 516-26-085

Release of Directory Information

- (1) The university may release "directory information" concerning a student to the public unless the student requests in writing of the university registrar that the student's directory information not be released except as provided in WAC 516-26-070, 516-26-075, 516-26-080, or 516-26-085.
- (2) The term "directory information" shall include information relating to the student's name, local telephone number, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, participation in officially recognized sports and activities, weight and height if a member of an athletic team, and the most recent previous educational institution attended.

WAC 516-26-090

Destruction of Education Records

Except as otherwise provided by law, the university shall not be prevented under this chapter from destroying all or any portion of a student's education records in accordance with established record retention schedules, provided that no education record to which a student has requested access shall be removed or destroyed by the university prior to providing the student with the requested access.

WAC 516-26-095

Notification of Rights Under This Chapter

The university shall annually notify students currently in attendance of their rights under this chapter and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The notice shall include a statement that the student as a right to each of the following:

- (1) Inspect and review the student's education records;
- (2) Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights;

- (3) Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that these regulations and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act allow;
- (4) File a complaint with the United States Department of Education under 34 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning alleged failures by the university to comply with the requirements of the act;
- (5) Information concerning the cost to be charged for reproducing copies of the student's records; and
- (6) Obtain a copy of the regulations in this chapter (chapter 516-26 WAC).

The notice shall indicate the places where copies of these regulations are located.

WAC 516-26-100